

EXHIBIT

10

THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
FOR THE MIDDLE DISTRICT OF NORTH CAROLINA

Civil Action No. 1:14-CV-00954-LCB-JLW

STUDENTS FOR FAIR ADMISSIONS,)
INC.,)
)
Plaintiff,)
)
v.)
)
UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA,)
et al.,)
)
Defendants,)
)
and)
)
LUIS ACOSTA; ANDREW BRENNAN,)
CHRISTOPHER JACKSON on behalf of)
C.J.; RAMONIA JONES on behalf of R.J.;)
JULIA NIEVES on behalf of I.N.; ANGIE &)
KEVIN MILLS on behalf of Q.M.; LAURA)
ORNELAS; CECILIA POLANCO;)
TAMIKA WILLIAMS on behalf of A.J.;)
and STAR WINGATEBEY)
)
)
Defendant-Intervenors.)
)

DECLARATION OF JESSICA MENCIA

Jessica Mencia, pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 1746, declares the following:

1. My name is Jessica Mencia, I am over 18 years of age, and I am fully competent to make this declaration.

2. I am a full-time undergraduate student at UNC-Chapel Hill. I am in a rising junior and am pursuing a major in Public Policy and a minor in Latino/Latina Studies.

3. I am a Latina, specifically Honduran American.

4. I am a first generation college student, and I come from a lower-income family. I am from North Carolina.

5. I chose UNC-CH because of the breadth of opportunities available here: research, outreach, and programs I didn't see at other public universities. Out of all the public universities in NC, I thought UNC-CH the environment was the one in which I would best be able to grow as a person.

6. I think that as a Policy major, my professors were more aware and attuned to the needs of students from diverse backgrounds, and that has been a great support for me. I don't believe that's the case in all the majors however. I also have been very happy to be a part of the Latinx community here at UNC. I'm from a very rural area, and I don't think I was able to be who I truly was until I joined that community. A class I took on Latinx identity influenced me greatly as well. I now feel like I have more control over my identity and how I choose to present who I am. I belong to the Carolina Hispanic Association and NC Sli mentor program, as well as Students United for Immigrant Equality.

7. For the Latinx community in particular, I think that issues of diversity are particularly complex. On campus, there are many centers for many different student groups, affinity groups, and others. There is not a center for the Latinx community. The

Estamos Aquí UNC movement really united the Latinx community to advocate for itself and for the creation of such a center. The movement is ongoing. Although within the Latinx community there are people from many countries and backgrounds, in advocating for this center, the different Latinx groups really came together. Because there are very few Latinx students at UNC, we have had to find unity across the Latinx spectrum and not maintain some of the divisions among countries and regions as older generations often maintain.

8. As a student of color at UNC, I know there are some students who question whether I deserve to be here. At one campus event, I remember a white student talking about how he had high SAT scores and GPA but he didn't get scholarships because of students of color being admitted into the school over him. The implication was that students of color who were inferior to him had gotten that financial assistance instead. The reality is that at an elite school like UNC, most of us had really good test scores and grades in high school. While I think that education should be affordable across the board, blaming the issues of white students on people of color insinuates that students of color are undeserving of admissions to top tier universities. I think the mistaken view about students of color being unqualified is widespread among white students even if some people don't talk about it in public. I did not feel welcomed or cherished by the UNC community in that moment, I felt more like I was a scapegoat for the white students to project their emotions onto.

9. In a Women's Studies class I took, I was one of three women of color. Luckily,

my professor and fellow class members didn't expect me to speak for all women of color, but the three of us did bring a perspective to that class that would have been completely missing without us. For my friends in STEM and other fields, I think they often feel they are the only person of color and the environment is not as respectful or welcoming. I remember one friend in Political Science whose professor used the term "illegals" to refer to some immigrants. She thought that was very inappropriate and was upset by it, but when asked why she didn't speak up or correct her professor, she said that she just felt too outnumbered.

10. I understand that the administration struggles with how to address issues of race on campus. I know we are a public university and I believe that constrains us due to funding. But first, in terms of the Latinx community, which is very small but will be growing, I don't think the administration knows what to do with us in terms of providing support and a space. There are only a very few professors who are Latinx. More importantly, there is only one administrative person who is Latinx, and he seems to do all the work related to Latinx issues on campus. He's wonderful, and I don't think it's intentional to have one overworked community member doing all the work with the Latinx community, but that's what's happened. I think the administration needs to have more staff and more resources for the many Latinx focused initiatives, especially when it comes to mental health and being present for students emotionally.

11. Second, the narrative around Silent Sam and Saunders Hall at UNC has been lacking. On Facebook and online forums, the main theme I see is that students of

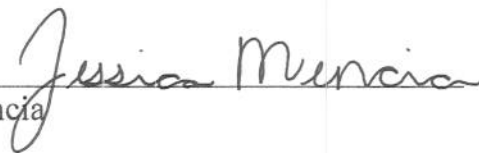
color who are upset are overreacting over something that is purely historical. I think this argument is particularly weak because if we, as students of color, are expressing our discomfort with the building, then other students should not attempt to challenge our identities, experiences, and emotions. The change of name for what was formerly Saunders Hall was accompanied by a moratorium on name changes. I sometimes think the administration feels it doesn't have to respond in a systematic or complete way to the concerns of students of color because it knows we are leaving in a set amount of time. They can just wait us out, which is usually what happens when it comes to students who attempt to challenge the university.

12. During my time as a first-year student of color at UNC-CH, it was hard because it is a new and unfamiliar space. I was one of two people from my high school to attend UNC-CH. I had to navigate the experience on my own and had no group to look to for support. Because of my major, I was able to find my own support, but in a large major like Biology, I think students of color find it much harder or are unable to find the support they need. I was very fortunate to find my major and professors who could help and support new students of color. Navigating these systems is almost like a game, you have to figure out what offices and/or professors will be the most understanding to you and your family's socioeconomic status.

13. One good resource for students of color is Carolina Covenant, a program which exists to support low-income students. Because a lot of students of color are low-income, this program serves many of us. I think it is one of our strongest assets at UNC.

The office really understands the particularized issues and challenges facing students from low-income families. But I know my friends have had experiences in the general financial assistance office where the office did not understand the realities and financial situations that are tied to being low-income. This knowledge shouldn't be kept in a silo. I feel that while Carolina Covenant does an excellent job, all of the staff within UNC offices should understand and be able to assist students from all socioeconomic backgrounds, not just the Covenant office.

I declare under penalty of perjury that the foregoing is true and correct. Executed
this 24th day of May, 2017.



Jessica Mencia